

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 1 and 9. Please amend Claims 4-8, 10, 12-17.

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled).

2. (Canceled).

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended). The ball valve of claim 5 ~~1~~, wherein the valve seat defines a central longitudinal axis substantially co-axial with a central longitudinal axis of the fluid inlet and fluid outlet, and further wherein the connecting portion has greater flexibility along the longitudinal axis than does the cantilevered portion.

5. (Currently amended). ~~The ball valve of claim 1, further comprising~~ A ball valve, comprising:

a valve body defining an inner cavity and having a fluid inlet and fluid outlet;

a control ball element rotatably mounted in the inner cavity, and having a segment defining a ball face;

a flexible annular valve seat positioned in the valve body, the seat comprising a base portion, a cantilevered portion having a sealing face disposed toward the ball face, and a connecting portion between the base portion and the cantilevered portion that is lesser in width than are the base portion and the cantilevered portion; and

a retaining ring removably disposed in the fluid inlet of the valve body, said retaining ring contacting the base portion of the valve seat and securing the valve seat in place, said retaining